



**This brochure answers some frequently asked questions about California's Smog Check Program.**

- Q** What are the environmental benefits of the Smog Check Program?
- A** The Smog Check Program has greatly reduced air pollution created by about 27 million cars in California. According to the California Air Resources Board, the program removes more than 450 tons of smog-forming pollutants from California's air every day.

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**Sponsored by:**

The California Department of Consumer Affairs  
and the Bureau of Automotive Repair



[www.smogcheck.ca.gov](http://www.smogcheck.ca.gov)

Some things you  
need to know about

# Smog Check

in California



**Q Is my vehicle required to get a Smog Check?**

**A** Your vehicle needs a Smog Check if it is more than six years old and the model year is 1976 or newer. (This does not include diesels, motorcycles, electric vehicles, and two-cylinder engine vehicles).

**Q How often does my vehicle have to be tested?**

**A** Your vehicle must be tested every other year. A Smog Check is also required if you sell your vehicle and it is older than four years. Some vehicles may require a Smog Check at a Test-Only station.

**Q What is a Test-Only station?**

**A** Test-Only stations are licensed Smog Check stations that are only allowed to test cars. State law prohibits them from making repairs.

**Q How will I know if I need to take my car to a Test-Only station?**

**A** You will be notified on the registration renewal notice sent by the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) if your vehicle must be inspected at a Test-Only station.

**Q How can I find a Test-Only station?**

**A** You can find the nearest Test-Only station by visiting [www.smogcheck.ca.gov](http://www.smogcheck.ca.gov) or by calling 1-800-952-5210.

**Q What is a Gold Shield station?**

**A** It is a licensed Smog Check station that meets certain performance criteria in order to certify all vehicles it repairs. This includes vehicles that fail required Smog Checks at Test-Only stations. Vehicles that are repaired at Gold Shield stations do not have to return to a Test-Only station for a Smog Check certificate after repairs have been made. The certificate may be issued by a Gold Shield station. To find a Gold Shield station near you, visit [www.smogcheck.ca.gov](http://www.smogcheck.ca.gov).

**Q How much does a Smog Check cost?**

**A** Smog Check prices vary in different areas. Prices for Smog Checks aren't regulated, so motorists are encouraged to shop around. For a list of stations in your area, visit [www.smogcheck.ca.gov](http://www.smogcheck.ca.gov).

**Q How can I help my vehicle pass a Smog Check?**

**A** Performing proper and regular vehicle maintenance according to your owner's manual, and not tampering with the emissions control equipment are keys to passing Smog Check. Proper maintenance also helps to lower your vehicle's emissions.

**Q What happens if my vehicle fails a Smog Check?**

**A** In order to complete your registration, you will need to obtain the repairs necessary for it to pass its Smog Check retest. Be sure to check to see if you are eligible for our Consumer Assistance Program (CAP) for repairs. If the car is not worth repairing and you are eligible, the State may buy it for \$1,000. To get a CAP application, visit [www.smogcheck.ca.gov](http://www.smogcheck.ca.gov).

**Q What if I can't afford the repairs?**

**A** If you are required to take your vehicle to a Test-Only station, you automatically qualify for up to \$500 in repair assistance under CAP once you pay for the first \$100 of repair costs. You may also qualify if your income is within certain levels, regardless of where you got your Smog Check. If you qualify based upon income, you will only pay for the first \$20 of repairs. To get a CAP application, visit [www.smogcheck.ca.gov](http://www.smogcheck.ca.gov).



[www.smogcheck.ca.gov](http://www.smogcheck.ca.gov)

